

## FOR SUNDAY READING.

## MY STAY.

O, my Father, be my stay  
In the dark and cloudy day,  
When the sunlight fades and chill winds  
moan.

When all earthly comforts fail,  
When no earthly hope avails,  
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

When oppressed by care and grief,  
I am longing for relief—  
Ever seeking rest, and finding none,  
O, my Father, then in love  
Every earthly prop remove,  
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

O, my Father, be my stay  
In the bright and sunny day,  
When the shades of grief and care have flown,  
Lest I then forget to bless  
Thee, Source of my happiness,  
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

By the comfort Thou dost lend,  
By Thy mercies without end,  
Teach me still with grateful heart to own  
'Tis a blessed thing for me  
Thus to feel my need of Thee,  
Thus to lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

—Alice Rapalje, in N. Y. Observer

## OUR LEVEL BEST.

## The Incentive and the Reward of Work for God.

Working for God is the vocation of the Christian. That work lies within two spheres, one sphere usually involving the other. Work for God is oftenest work for our fellows. Sometimes it is work for ourselves in the effort to subdue wrong states of the heart, or to build up right states of feeling. Often, however, the effort to create right states in ourselves is best promoted indirectly by active efforts directly for the good of others, so that we may almost say that our entire work for God is working for others. Now, in this work for others God demands our best, and we should not be satisfied with any lesser demand.

Those only are artists who feel that their best is constantly required of them. Every artistic production is a partial manifestation of someone's mind. It is more or less noble according to the elevation and grandeur of that mind, and according to the felicity and truthfulness of its outward expression.

The Christian life is an artistic product in the highest sense of the word. It is the best possible outward manifestation of an inward conception of God. It may be marred by an intrinsic deficiency in the idea, or by the unskillful manner of the expression of the idea, or by both. But Christian living always demands our very highest powers, and the very best we can do.

God is too wise and kind a master to require less than our best. He has given us a task that might fill the scope of an archangel, and the task is the pledge of the enlargement of our powers to fill it. This task is, to show day by day and hour by hour, as much of Christ, both in act and in spirit, as we are able to manifest. How shall we crowd more of the loving acts of Jesus into our lives, how concentrate more of His spirit into each manifestation of our inner spirit?

If an artist must give the strongest possible effect to the picture as a whole, or, in other words, must have this highest possible concentration in the manifestation of his idea, so a Christian needs to concentrate his energy on being a Christian, and on living like a Christian. The best work of an artist is not haphazard and accidental, nor is it the result of his meaning well in general as a painter; but the pictures of the master-painter are the converged, concentrated energies of his mind, manifested in the very

best terms of his especial art. The Christian has the noblest picture to delineate for the world's critical yet appreciative eye; namely, the manifested Christ. Let him do it with the greatest possible consecration in its manifestation.

Such effort as this will reveal our inward deficiency in the knowledge of Christ. As a man can not write poetry who is destitute of the poetic impulse or ideal, so a Christian can not show Christ, in his external acts, who has not Christ within him in far larger measure than even his best acts can manifest. The outer manifestation will fall away when there is no inner reality.

Doing our best for Christ will show us that our best is not good enough to take us to Heaven; and the better we try to do, the more vitality we use our powers for God the very limit of our ability, the more we shall be constrained in joy to confess that the way of being saved by grace is the best way, the only way, and we shall see how reasonable it is (yet how delightful for us) that the stress of laboring to save ourselves is removed, in order that we may work with such elasticity, freedom and rapture as a true artist feels when he is released from undue anxiety, and can give himself unrestrainedly to his work. God gives us this beautiful freedom in working for Him. Our thoughts need not revert to self. God has put all our labor for Him on a higher plane than that of securing our personal salvation.

Doing our best for God insures joy, and casts a wonderful light over life. It is said again of Leonardo da Vinci that he seemed to see nature in constant holiday brightness. No doubt there was a distinct connection between his loving to do his best, and this ever-present brightness, in the nature for him. Joy comes with the determination to do each day our best for God.—S. S. Times.

## Giving to the Poor.

"Such as I have I give thee." It is becoming quite fashionable to give to the needy. It always has been fashionable among the true followers of the lowly Nazarene, but too many of us want to wait until we have what we think to be worth giving, and while we are waiting needy ones are perishing. Peter did not wait, but gave such as he had, and it was the most valuable gift that could have been bestowed.—Rev. Julius P. Graham.

## TERSE AND EPIGRAMMATIC.

## Some of the Bolled-Down Wisdom of the Ram's Horn.

God's best friend is light.

Gold is never so bright as when it is doing the will of God.

The wisdom God gives takes with it all other gifts.

Every profane man has the devil's name written on his tongue.

The moment a sinner comes to himself he wants to come to God.

We show that we love Christ when we are praying to be like Him.

The love that "suffereth long and is kind" is not the love of self.

There is as much kilt in a selfish heart as there is in a musket.

To voluntarily go in bad company is to court the society of the devil.

It is impossible to tire the man who has the rest of Christ in his heart.

The sound of an oath hurts a Christian more than a blow in the face.

A warm-hearted preacher will generally find a way to warm up a cold church.

Claiming to love and shedding no blood for the good of men is hypocrisy.

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